

The radar installations were all demolished after a few minutes. The whole base looked like a live volcano. The division headquarters, the two artillery grounds with 12 big guns, the airstrip with 125 planes of different kinds, the supply area with four ammunition dumps and one fuel storage, 82 barracks, 100 blockhouses, 29 bunkers, 179 military vehicles among them 39 tanks and armoured troop carriers, were demolished. Enemy casualties totalled 1,270, including 150 U.S. pilots and many U.S. officers.

U.S. MARINE DESERTS; LETTER EXPLAINS ACTION

Hanoi in English to Southeast Asia 1300 GMT 19 Mar 69 B (FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

[Text] As was reported earlier, PFC John Lowmy of the U.S. 3d Marine Division, on February 22 crossed over to the People's Liberation Armed Forces side.

From an NLF-controlled area in South Vietnam, the American (?Marine) sent to his division buddies a letter explaining why he made such a decision. The letter, released by GPA, reads in full:

To the U.S. troops of the 9th Regiment, 3d Marine Division. I am John Lowmy. I was born on August 13, 1949, in Brooklyn, New York. I was formerly a private first class, service number 2467056 of M Company, 3d Battalion, 9th Regiment, 3d Marine Division.

I came to South Vietnam on February 7, 1969, and I have been in Da Nang and Quang Tri. I served for only 2 days in Quang Tri. My officers sent me with a unit in mopping-up operations in the mountains, to make up for the lack of men because GI's have lost their lives in battle with the Liberation Armed Forces.

So, I have been involved in the dirty war of aggression, which is most formidable to me. I got upset with this war and opposed it, because the bigwigs in the White House and the Pentagon have been dragging hundreds of thousands of American boys to the bushy jungles and swamps of Vietnam, and they have no knowledge of the [words indistinct] about getting killed uselessly for their dirty ambition.

I decided to slip away. I returned to truth and justice by crossing over to the side of the Liberation Armed Forces on February 22, 1969, to protest the war of aggression being waged by our government.

It is the dirtiest war in U.S. history. Our government is using its great military and economic strength to crush and colonize a little people, who want only peace, independence, and true friends.

Since I have been living with the Liberation Armed Forces, I feel that I have been treated very well by them. They do not humiliate me, and I was given medical attention. I have been fed real well these days. Their policy on [words indistinct] is the high (?pride) of mankind and ascertains a very lenient and humane treatment to captured GI's.

What are you fighting for in Vietnam and for whom are you fighting here? Why do you run into deadly dangers in the bushy jungles and cope with the liberation forces who are well armed and well trained? They are a seasoned army and fight very well for their just cause.

Being exposed to the dangers and hardships of this wholly unnecessary war, having to live in fear, nervousness, and desperate days, [as received] undoubtedly none of you like to be killed in this deadly fighting. Probably, a homebound ship and peaceful reunion will be your wishes. To speed up peace restoration in South Vietnam and homecoming, you must go now and resolutely refuse to take part in military operations in the mountains. Demand your repatriation now, don't go face the Liberation Armed Forces in battle, and be quick to put your rifles down and let yourselves be captured. You will be treated well.

Get out of this dirty and criminal war of aggression, sneak away to contact and cross over to the side of the Liberation Armed Forces. Your lives will be assured, and you will be given humane treatment. This is how you can remain alive and return to your families.

That was a letter from John Lowmy, who crossed over to the People's Liberation Armed Forces side last February 22.

ATTACKS, CRIMES OF U.S. RECOUNTED, CONDEMNED

Soc Trang Raid

LIBERATION PRESS AGENCY (Clandestine) in English to East Europe and the Far East
1521 GMT 16 Mar 69 B

[Text] South Vietnam March 16 GPA--Five tons of demolition bombs and many napalm bombs and rockets were dumped at noon February 27 on the century-old O Chum Pagoda, Thanh Tri district, Soc Trang Province. The raid was conducted by six jet planes, three armed helicopters, and one reconnaissance plane.

In hamlets nearby, 12 civilians were killed and 19 others wounded. Most of the victims were old people, women and children. In addition, 35 houses and 200 tons of paddy were burned. Enemy troops later entered and looted the seriously damaged pagoda.

On March 1, many Buddhist priests and nuns in the area, among them those surviving the raid, marched to the district town to demand compensation. It should be recalled that in 1968, 23 pagodas in the province had been subject to air raids by the U.S.-puppets.

Binh Long Attacks

LIBERATION PRESS AGENCY (Clandestine) in English to East Europe and the Far East
1554 GMT 17 Feb 69 B

[Text] South Vietnam March 17 GPA--U.S. and puppet aircraft and artillery during the 6 straight days ending February 16 repeatedly pounded Loc Hoa hamlet in Loc Ninh district, Binh Long Province, northwest of Saigon, razing it to the ground.

On February 15 and 16, the days when the N.F.L. Tet cease-fire order was still in force, U.S. helicopter gunships coming in waves wantonly strafed the hamlet, killing 15 people and wounding 31 others, mostly women and children. All seven members of Mr. Dieu Sun's family were cut down by a shell from a helicopter. The savage raid resulted in more than 200 dwelling houses destroyed, a large quantity of production tools and other property burned and hundreds of people rendered homeless.